Baby Steps

Created by Katsuki Hikaru

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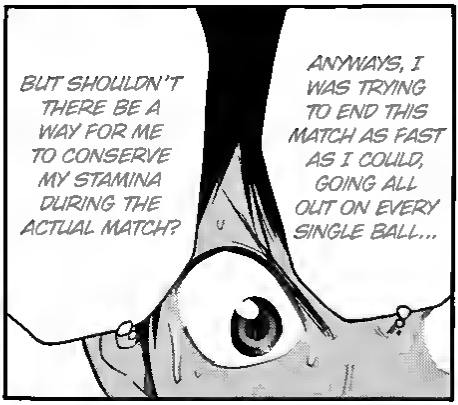
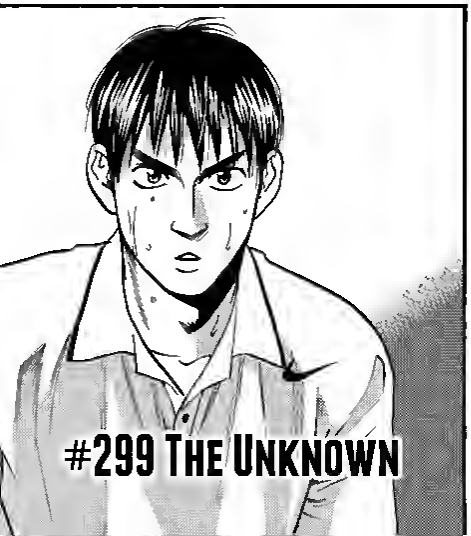
PLEASE CONSIDER BUYING THIS MANGA TO SUPPORT THE AUTHOR WHEN IT IS AVAILABLE IN YOUR COUNTRY

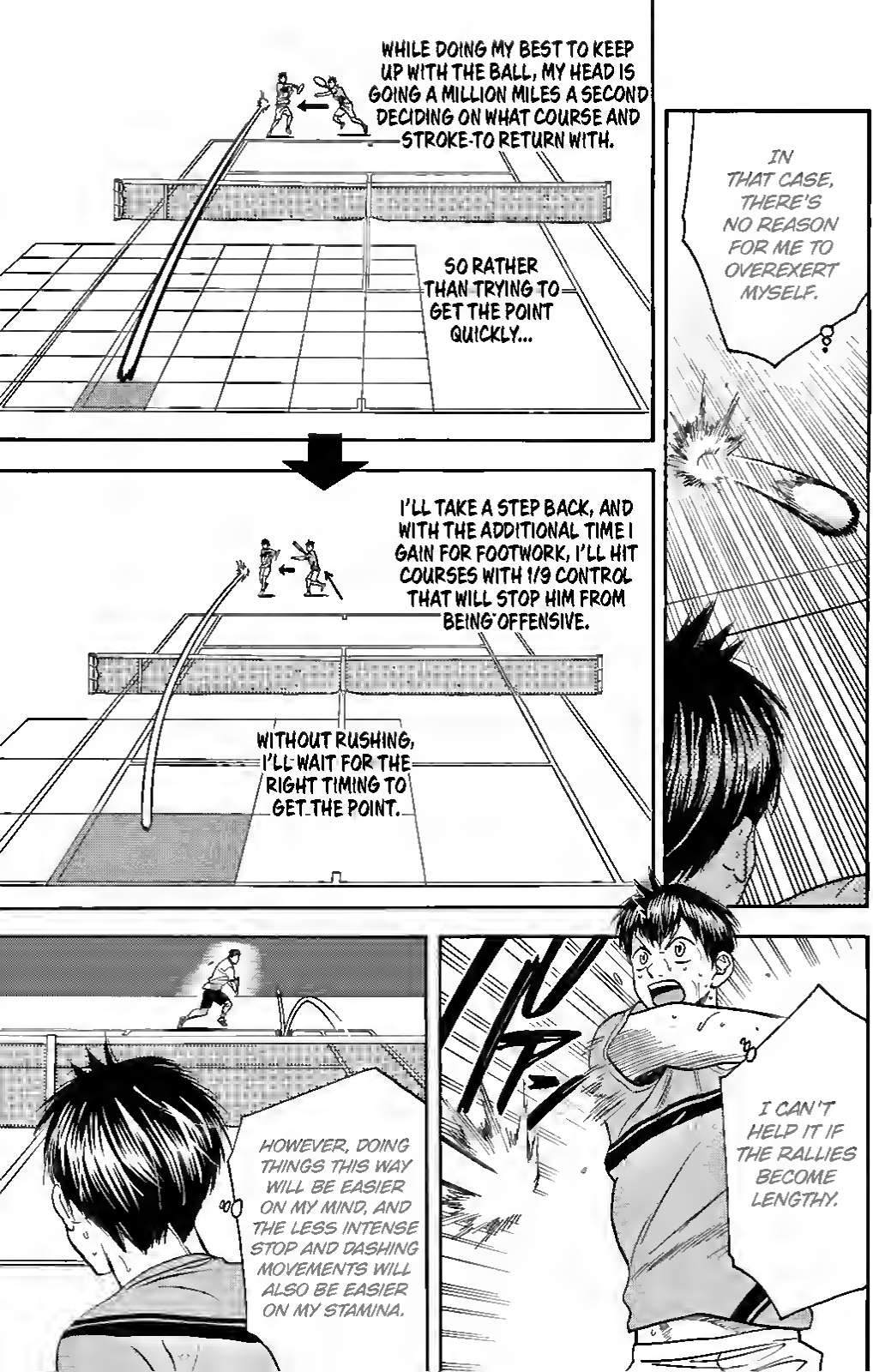
CONSERVE ...
PUT SIMPLY, IT WOULD MEAN PHYSICAL STAMINA. THAT SAID, THERE ARE MULTIPLE WAYS OF GOING ABOUT THAT...
1
MARUO EIICHIRO
6
KONISHI KIMIO
4

TIME.
A METHOD TO CONSERVE STAMINA WITHOUT DROPPING MY PERFORMANCE...


BUT SHOULDN'T THERE BE A WAY FOR ME TO CONSERVE MY STAMINA DURING THE ACTUAL MATCH?
ANYWAYS, I WAS TRYING TO END THIS MATCH AS FAST AS I COULD, GOING ALL OUT ON EVERY SINGLE BALL...


#299 THE UNKNOWN

I WANTED TO CONSERVE STRENGTH, BUT ENDED UP SERVING NORMALLY ANYWAY...
IF I REALLY AM BETTER THAN MY OPPONENT, THEN IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE.
AFTER PLAYING DEFENSIVELY AND LOSING THE FIRST SET, HOW WILL KONISHI-SAN RESPOND?
KUH
I WON'T RETURN IT WITH STRENGTH, AND I'LL ALSO AVOID HITTING A DIFFICULT COURSE FOR NOW I'LL JUST RETURN IT DEEP.
IT WAS A GOOD SERVE, BUT HE STILL RETURNED IT WELL.
HE'S STILL NOT GOING ON THE ATTACK.


WHILE DOING MY BEST TO KEEP UP WITH THE BALL, MY HEAD IS GOING A MILLION MILES A SECOND DECIDING ON WHAT COURSE AND STROKE TO RETURN WITH.
SO RATHER THAN TRYING TO GET THE POINT QUICKLY...
I'LL TAKE A STEP BACK, AND WITH THE ADDITIONAL TIME I GAIN FOR FOOTWORK, I'LL HIT COURSES WITH 1/9 CONTROL THAT WILL STOP HIM FROM BEING OFFENSIVE.
WITHOUT RUSHING, I'LL WAIT FOR THE RIGHT TIMING TO GET THE POINT.
IN THAT CASE, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO OVEREXERT MYSELF.
HOWEVER, DOING THINGS THIS WAY WILL BE EASIER ON MY MIND, AND THE LESS INTENSE STOP AND DASHING MOVEMENTS WILL ALSO BE EASIER ON MY STAMINA.
I CAN'T HELP IT IF THE RALLIES BECOME LENGTHY.

HAA.
HE'S TAKEN A SET, YET HE'S NOT ATTACKING AGGRESSIVELY...?
I'LL PUT MY STRENGTH BEHIND THIS ONE!!
HE'S DECIDED TO ATTACK!!

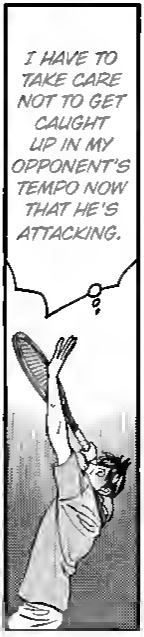
YESS!
HE RECKLESSLY ATTACKED, CREATING AN OPENING FOR ME!
15 — 0
Huh?
KIMIO-SAN, FOCUS ON THIS POINT!

キュッ
はっ
I'LL AIM MY SERVE THE SAME AS I HAVE BEEN.
I CAN'T LOSE HERE IN THE PRELIMINARIES THIS YEAR!
HE WENT ON THE ATTACK ALL OF A SUDDEN!

DO MY BEST TO GET IT PAST HIM!!
NUAAH.
KUH.
15 — 15
...HE FORCED IT OVER!

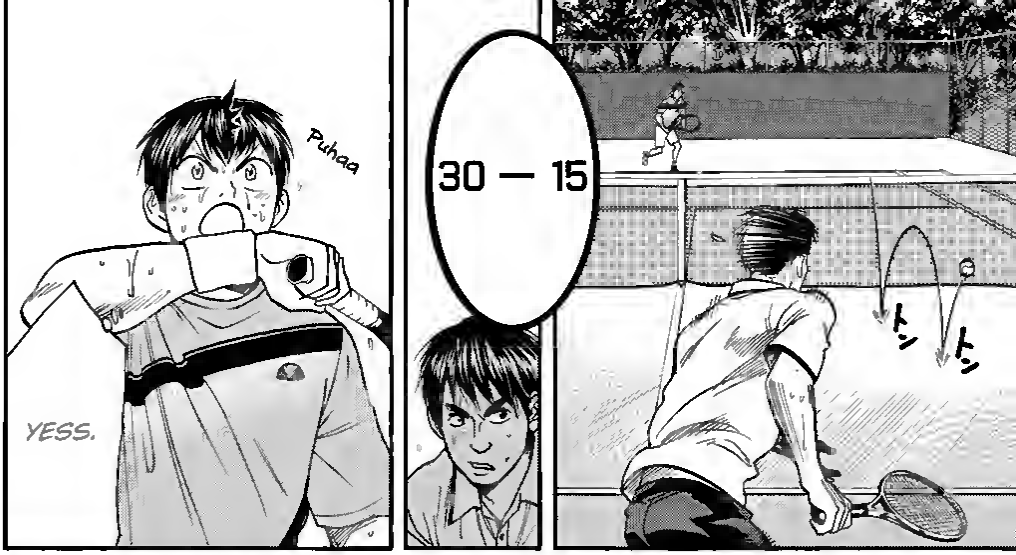
HAA
HAA

MY OPPONENT IS AN ADULT WITH MORE EXPERIENCE THAN ME.
THAT'S RIGHT.


I HAVE TO TAKE CARE NOT TO GET CAUGHT UP IN MY OPPONENT'S TEMPO NOW THAT HE'S ATTACKING.

IF I RELAX FOR EVEN A MOMENT, HE'LL GET ME.

I THINK THIS TYPE OF PLAY STYLE WILL GO WELL.
TO KEEP HIM FROM BEING OFFENSIVE... HIT IT AS DEEP AS POSSIBLE.
RETURN WITH THE LEAST RISK POSSIBLE, AND ONLY WHEN IT'S ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.


Puhaa
YESS.
30 — 15
トン
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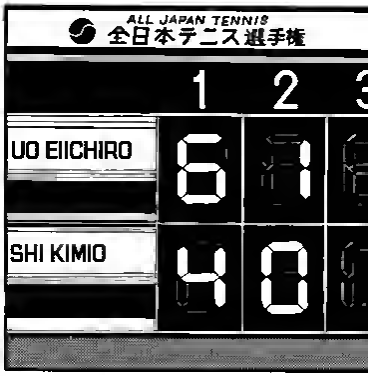
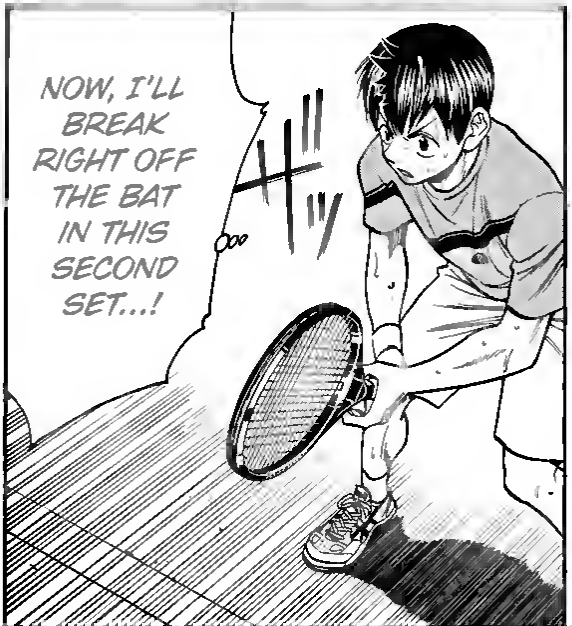
I WAS ABLE TO KEEP MY SERVE GAME MORE COMFORTABLY THAN EXPECTED
WHEN HE STARTS ATTACKING MORE, HE MAKES MISTAKES, SO IT DEFINITELY FEELS EASIER ON ME


ALL JAPAN TENNIS
全日本テニス選手権
1
2
UO EIICHIRO
6
1
SHI KIMIO
40


NOW, I'LL BREAK RIGHT OFF THE BAT IN THIS SECOND SET...!
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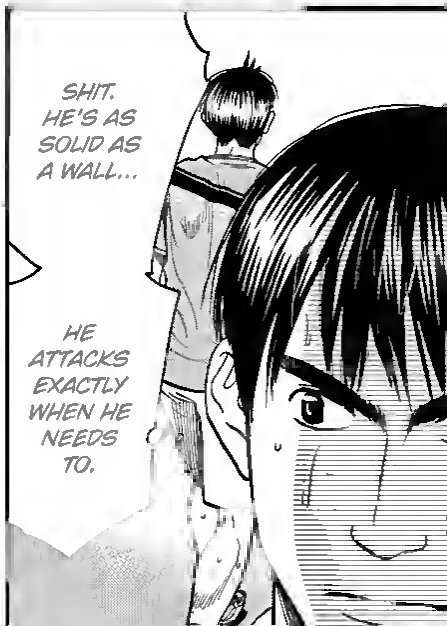
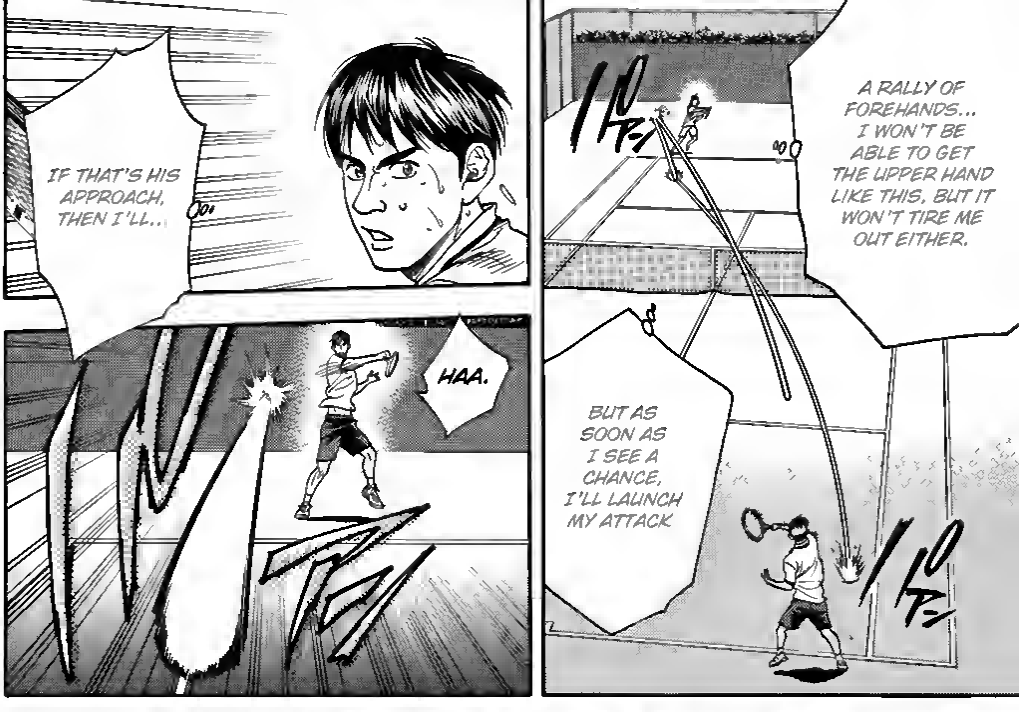

SHIT. HE'S AS SOLID AS A WALL...
HE ATTACKS EXACTLY WHEN HE NEEDS TO.

FIRST, I HAVE TO RETURN THIS SERVE CLEAN AND DEEP.
PRIORITIZE STOPPING HIS ATTACK RATHER THAN GETTING THE POINT!
...NO, THAT'S NOT IT!
Huh?
IT'S A NICE COURSE... HE'S ATTACKING.
BUT IF I TAKE A STEP BACK AND SIMPLY RETURN IT DEEP, I STILL HAVE SOME BREATHING ROOM.


IF THAT'S HIS APPROACH, THEN I'LL...
HAA.
A RALLY OF FOREHANDS... I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET THE UPPER HAND LIKE THIS, BUT IT WON'T TIRE ME OUT EITHER.
BUT AS SOON AS I SEE A CHANCE, I'LL LAUNCH MY ATTACK

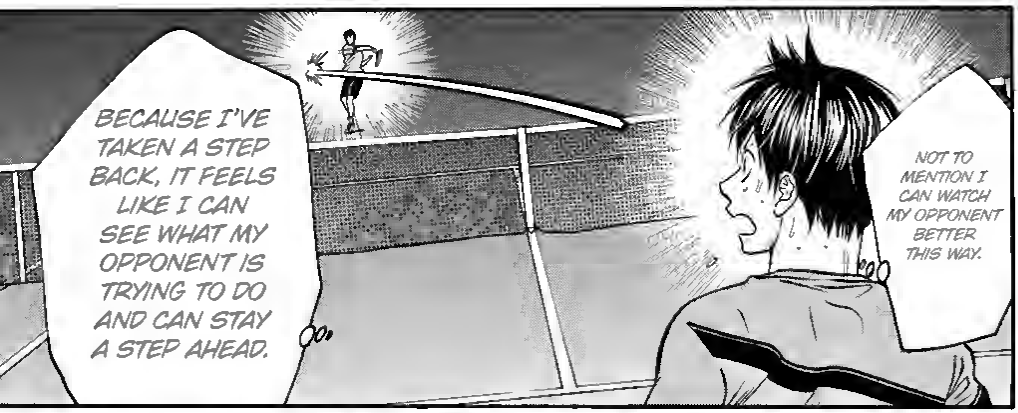
KONISHI-SAN'S SPECIALTY FOREHAND STROKE DOWN THE LINE!

SEND A SLICE TO HIS BACKHAND AS FAST AS I CAN...
IN THE FIRST SET, I GOT A GOOD GRASP ON KONISHI-SAN'S STRONG AND WEAK POINTS.

KUH.
BEING OFFENSIVE ON BALLS THIS WEAK AND SHALLOW IS THE ONLY OPTION..!
ATTA
YEAH.
CONSERVATION DOESN'T MEAN TO HOLD BACK OR LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.

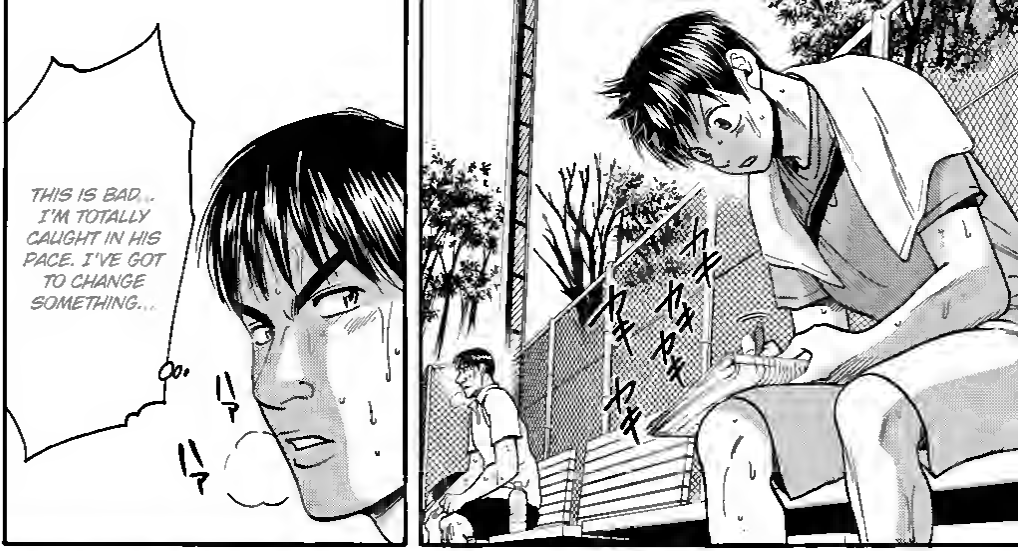
0-30
15-30
IT MEANS TO FIGHT IN A WAY THAT LOWERS THE RISK, FOR THE HIGHEST RETURN.
15-40
YOU GRASP THE OPPONENT'S ABILITIES TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY...
AND ASCERTAIN WHERE TO TAKE RISKS.

I'M IMPROVING. IT'S DEFINITELY BETTER THAN ATTACKING FULL THROTTLE WITH ALL MY STRENGTH AND ENERGY LIKE I WAS IN THE FIRST SET.
EACH POINT TAKES LONGER, BUT I HAVE A HIGHER CHANCE OF WINNING THEM.
IT'S THE RESULT OF MAKING USE OF MY CHANGE OF PACE AND CLEARLY DIFFERENTIATING WHEN I'M ATTACKING OR DEFENDING.


NOT TO MENTION I CAN WATCH MY OPPONENT BETTER THIS WAY.
BECAUSE I'VE TAKEN A STEP BACK, IT FEELS LIKE I CAN SEE WHAT MY OPPONENT IS TRYING TO DO AND CAN STAY A STEP AHEAD.

1 2 3
EIICHIRO
6 2
KIMIO
40

全日本テニス選手権
1 2 3
EIICHIRO
6 3
KIMIO
40


THIS IS BAD... I'M TOTALLY CAUGHT IN HIS PACE. I'VE GOT TO CHANGE SOMETHING...
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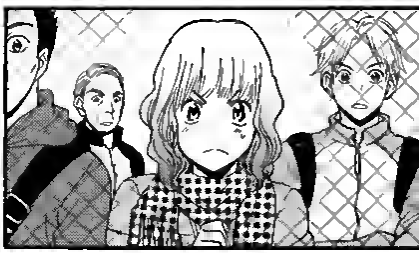
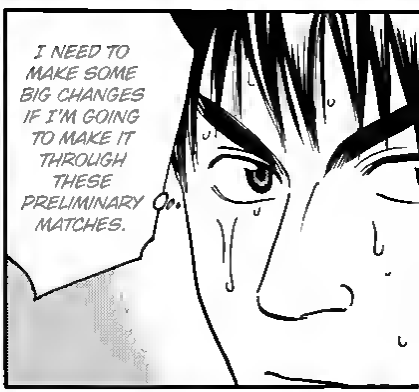
カキ
カキ
カキ
カキ

TIME!
I HAVE TO CHANGE RIGHT NOW!




I NEED TO MAKE SOME BIG CHANGES IF I'M GOING TO MAKE IT THROUGH THESE PRELIMINARY MATCHES.

ドン
YEH